A

# Confutation of Atheism

From the

*Structure and Origin of Humane Bodies.*

The Third and Last PART.

A

# SERMON

Preached at

Saint Martin's in the Fields,

*SEPTEMBER* the 5th. 1692.

Being the *Fifth* of the Lecture Founded by the Honourable *ROBERT BOYLE*, Esquire.

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The Second Edition.

*LONDON*,
Printed for *Henry Mortlock*, at the *Phœnix* in St. *Paul's* Church-yard. 1692.

# Imprimatur.

*Geo. Royse*, R^mo in Christo Patri ac D^no D^no *Johanni* Archiep. *Cantuar.* à Sacris Domest.

*Septemb.* 7.
1692.

# ACTS XVII. 27.

*That they ſhould ſeek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him: though he be not far from every one of us; for in him we Live, and Move, and have our Being.*

IN my former Diſcourſes, to which I muſt refer you, I have endeavour'd to prove, that Humane Race was neither (1) from Everlaſting without beginning; nor (2) owes its beginning to the Influence of Heavenly Bodies; nor (3) to what they call Nature, or to the neceſſary and mechanical motions of dead ſenſleſs Matter. I proceed now to examin the fourth and laſt Plea of the Enemies to Religion and their own Souls, That Mankind came accidentally into the World, and hath its Life and Motion and Being by mere *Chance* and *Fortune*.

We need not much wonder, that this laſt Opinion ſhould obtain almoſt univerſally among the Atheiſts of theſe times. For whereas the Other do require ſome ſmall ſtock of Philoſophy to underſtand or maintain them: This Account is ſo eaſy and compendious,

that it needs none at all; and conſequently is the more proper and agreeable to the great Induſtry and Capacity of the moſt numerous Party of them. For what more eaſy to ſay, than that all the Bodies of the firſt Animals and Plants were ſhuffled into their ſeveral Forms and Structures *fortuitouſly*, that is, theſe Atheiſts know not how, nor will trouble themſelves to endeavour to know? For that is the meaning of Chance; and yet this is all, that they ſay, or can ſay to the great Matter in queſtion. And indeed this little is enough in all reaſon; and could they impoſe on the reſt of Mankind, as eaſily as delude themſelves with a notion, That *Chance* can effect a thing; it would be the moſt expedite and effectual means to make their Cauſe victorious over Vertue and Religion. For if you once do allow them ſuch an acceptation of Chance, you have precluded your ſelf (they think) from any more reaſoning and objecting againſt them. The Mechanical Atheiſt, though you grant him his Laws of Mechaniſm, is nevertheleſs inextricably puzzled and baffled with the firſt Formation of Animals: for he muſt undertake to determin all the various Motions and Figures and Poſitions and Combinations

tions of his Atoms; and to demonſtrate, that ſuch a quantity of Motion impreſſed upon Particles ſo ſhaped and ſituated, will neceſſarily range and diſpoſe them into the Form and Frame of an Organical Body: an attempt as difficult and unpromiſing of ſucceſs, as if he himſelf ſhould make the Eſſay, to produce ſome new Kinds of Animals out of ſuch ſenſleſs Materials, or to rebuild the moving and living Fabrick out of its duſt in the grave. But the Atheiſt, that we are now to deal with, if you do but concede to him, that Fortune may be an Agent; doth preſume himſelf ſafe and invulnerable, ſecure above the reach of any further diſputes. For if you proceed to ask queſtions, and bid him aſſign the proper Cauſes and determinate Manner of that fortuitous Formation: you thereby deny him what you granted before, and take away the very *Hypotheſis* and the Nature of Chance; which ſuppoſeth that no certain Cauſe or Manner of it can poſſibly be aſſigned. And as the ſtupidity of ſome Libertines, that demand a ſight of a Spirit or Humane Soul to convince them of its Exiſtence, hath been frequently and deſervedly expoſed; becauſe whatſoever may be the object of our Sight, muſt not be

be a Soul or Spirit, but an opake Body: ſo this Atheiſt would tax us of the like Nonſenſe and Contradiction; if after he hath named to us Fortune or Chance, we ſhould expect from him any particular and diſtinct account of the Origin of Mankind. Becauſe it is the very eſſence and notion of his Chance, to be wholly unaccountable: and if an account could be given of it; it would then no longer be Chance, but Mechaniſm, or a neceſſary production of certain Effects from certain Cauſes according to the Univerſal Laws of Motion. Thus we are to know, that if once we admit of Fortune in the Formation of Mankind; there is no further Enquiry to be made, no more Difficulties to be ſolved, and no Account to be demanded. And who then can admire, if the inviting eaſineſs and compendiouſneſs of this Aſſertion ſhould ſo dazle the eyes of our Atheiſt, that he over-looks thoſe groſs Abſurdities, that are ſo conſpicuous in it?

(1) For firſt, if this Atheiſt would have his Chance or Fortune to be a real and ſubſtantial Agent; as the Vulgar ſeem to have commonly apprehended, ſome making it a Divinity, others they do not conceive what: he is doubly more ſtupid and more ſupinely ignorant

norant than thoſe Vulgar; in that he aſſumes ſuch a notion of Fortune, as beſides its being erroneous, is inconſiſtent with his Atheiſm. For ſeeing that according to the Atheiſts, the whole Univerſe is *Corpus & Inane, Body and nothing elſe:* this Chance, if it do really and phyſically effect any thing, muſt it ſelf be Body alſo. And what a numerous train of Abſurdities do attend ſuch an aſſertion? too viſible and obvious to deſerve to be here inſiſted on. For indeed it is no leſs than flat contradiction to it ſelf. For if this Chance be ſuppoſed to be a Body; it muſt then be a part of the common Maſs of Matter: and conſequently be ſubject to the univerſal and neceſſary Laws of Motion: and therefore it cannot be Chance, but true Mechaniſm and Nature.

(2) But ſecondly, if he forbear to call Chance a real Agent, and is content to have it only a Reſult or Event: ſeeing that all Matter or ſome portion of it may be naturally exempt from theſe ſuppoſed Mechanical Laws, and be endowed with a power of ſpontaneous or fortuitous Motion; which power, when it is exerted, muſt produce an Effect properly Caſual, and therefore might conſtitute the firſt Animate Bodies accidentally, againſt

gainſt the ſuppoſed natural tendency of the Particles of thoſe Bodies: even this ſecond Aſſertion is contrary to common Senſe as well as common Obſervation. For how can he conceive, that any parcel of dead Matter can ſpontaneouſly divert and decline it ſelf from the line of its motion without a new impulſe from external Bodies? If it can intrinſecally ſtir it ſelf, and either commence its motion or alter its courſe; it muſt have a principle of ſelf-activity, which is Life and Senſe. But
*Serm.* 2. Senſe I have proved formerly to be incompatible with mere Bodies, even thoſe of the moſt compound and elaborate textures; much more with ſingle Atoms or ſolid Particles of Matter, that having no inteſtine motion of Parts are deſtitute of the firſt foundation and capacity of Life. And moreover, though theſe Particles ſhould be ſuppoſed to have this internal principle of Senſe, it would ſtill be repugnant to the notion of Chance: becauſe their Motions would not then be Caſual, but Voluntary; not by Chance, but Choice and Deſign. And *again*, we appeal to Obſervation, whether any Bodies have ſuch a power of Fortuitous Motion: we ſhould ſurely have experiment of it in the Effects

fects of Nature and Art: No Body would retain the ſame conſtant and uniform Weight according to its Bulk and Subſtance; but would vary perpetually, as that ſpontaneous power of Motion ſhould determin its preſent tendency. All the various Machins and Utenſils would now and then play odd Pranks and Capricio's quite contrary to their proper Structures and Deſigns of the Artificers. Whereas on the contrary all Bodies are obſerved to have always a certain and determinate Motion according to the degrees of their External Impulſe, and their inward Principle of Gravitation, and the Reſiſtence of the Bodies they occurr with: which therefore is without Error exactly foreſeen and computed by ſagacious Artiſts. And if ever Dead Matter ſhould deviate from this Motion; it could not proceed from it ſelf, but a Supernatural Agent; and ought not to be called a Chance, but a Miracle.

For Chance is but a mere Name, and really Nothing in it ſelf: a conception of our own Minds, and only a Compendious way of ſpeaking, whereby we would expreſs, That ſuch Effects, as are commonly attributed to Chance, were verily produced by their true

and proper Cauſes, but without their deſigning to produce them. And in any Event called Caſual, if you take away the real and phyſical Cauſes, there remains nothing, but a ſimple Negation of the Agents intending ſuch an Event: which Negation being no real Entity, but a Conception only of Man's Intellect wholly extrinſecal to the Action, can have no title to a ſhare in the production. As in that famous Example (which, *Plutarch* ſays, is the only one, where Fortune is related to have done a thing artificially) of a Painter, that having finiſhed the Picture of a Horſe, excepting the looſe Froth about his Mouth and his Bridle; and after many unſucceſsfull eſſays deſpairing to do that to his ſatisfaction, in a great rage threw his Spunge at it, all beſmear'd, as it was, with the Colours; which fortunately hitting upon the right place, by one bold ſtroke of Chance moſt exactly ſupplied the want of Skill in the Artiſt: even here it is manifeſt, that conſidering the Quantity and Determination of the Motion, that was impreſſed by the Painter's hand upon the Spunge, compounded with the ſpecifick Gravity of the Spunge, and the reſiſtence of the Air; the Spunge did mechanically and unavoidably

Plutarch. περὶ τύχης.

voidably move in that particular line of Motion, and ſo neceſſarily hit upon that part of the Picture; and all the paint, that it left there, was as certainly placed by true natural Cauſes, as any one ſtroke of the Pencil in the whole Piece. So that this ſtrange effect of the Spunge was fortuitous only with reſpect to the Painter, ſeeing he did not deſign nor foreſee ſuch an effect; but in it ſelf and as to its real Cauſes it was neceſſary and natural. In a word, the true notion of *Fortune* (τῆς τύχης) denoteth no more, than the Ignorance of ſuch an event in ſome Knowing Agent concerned about it. So that it owes its very Being to Human Underſtanding, and without relation to that is really Nothing. How abſurd then and ridiculous is the Atheiſt, that would make this Fortune the cauſe of the Formation of Mankind; whereas manifeſtly there could be no ſuch Thing or Notion in the World as Fortune, till Humane Nature was actually formed? It was Man that firſt made Fortune, and not Fortune that produced Man. For ſeeing that Fortune in its proper acceptation ſuppoſeth the Ignorance of ſomething, in a ſubject capable of Knowledge; if you take away Mankind, ſuch a Notion hath no Exiſtence, neither with relation to In-

animate Bodies that can be conſcious of nothing, nor to an Omniſcient God, that can be ignorant of nothing: And ſo likewiſe the adequate Meaning of *Chance* (τὸ Αὐτομάτου) (as it is diſtinguiſhed from Fortune; in that the latter is underſtood to befall only Rational Agents, but Chance to be among Inanimate Bodies) is really a bare Negation, that ſignifies no more than this, That any Effect among ſuch Bodies aſcribed to Chance, is verily produced by Phyſical Agents, according to the eſtabliſhed Laws of Motion, but without their Conſciouſneſs of concurring to the Production, and without their Intention of ſuch an Effect. So that *Chance* in its true ſenſe is all one with *Nature*: and both words are uſed promiſcuouſly by ſome ancient Writers to expreſs the ſame thing. And we muſt be wary, leſt we aſcribe any real Subſiſtence or Perſonality to this Nature or Chance: for it is merely a notional and imaginary thing; an abſtract Univerſal, which is properly Nothing; a Conception of our own making, occaſion'd by our reflecting upon the ſettled Courſe of things; denoting only thus much, That all thoſe Bodies move and act according

*Plato* X. de Legibus. Πῦρ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ γῆν καὶ ἀέρα, φύσει πάντα εἶναι καὶ τύχῃ φασίν.—ὅτι δὲ οὐ τέχνῃ, ἀλλὰ θεὸν ὅτι δὲ τέχνῃ, ἀλλὰ φύσει καὶ τύχῃ.

according to their eſſential properties and qualities without any conſciouſneſs or intention of ſo doing. So that in this genuine acceptation of Chance, here is nothing ſuppoſed, that can ſuperſede the known Laws of Natural Motion: and thus to attribute the Formation of Mankind to Chance, is all one with the former Atheiſtical Aſſertion, that aſcribes it to Nature or Mechaniſm: and conſequently it hath received a prolix and ſufficient Refutation in my preceding Diſcourſe.

(3) But thirdly, 'tis likely that our Atheiſt may willingly renounce the Doctrine of Chance as a thing differing from Nature, and may allow it to be the ſame thing, and that too no real and ſubſtantial Agent, but only an abſtract intellectual Notion: but ſtill he hath another Expedient in reſerve, which is a middle and ſafe way between the former rigourous Mechaniſm and the extravagancies of Fortuitous Motion: *viz.* That at the Beginning all things ('tis true) proceeded neceſſarily and fatally according to the Mechanical powers and affections of Matter: but nevertheleſs the ſeveral Kinds of Animals were not formed at the firſt trial and effort without one error or miſcarriage; (as ſtrict Mechaniſm would ſuppoſe;)

poſe;) but there was an immenſe Variety of Ferments and Tumors and Excreſcences of the Soil, pregnant and big with *Fœtus*'s of all imaginable ſhapes and ſtructures of Body: Millions of which were utterly uncapable of Life and Motion, being the *Molæ*, as it were, and the Abortions of Mother Earth: and many of thoſe that had Life and Powers to preſerve their own Individuals, yet wanted the due means of Propagation, and therefore could not tranſmit their Species to the following Ages: and that thoſe few only, that we now find in Being, did happen (for he cannot expreſs it but by the Characters of a Chance) to have all the parts neceſſary not only for their own Lives, but for the Continuation of their Kinds. This is the favourite Opinion, among the Atheiſts, and the moſt plauſible of all; by which they think they may elude that moſt formidable Argument for the Being of God, from the admirable contrivance of Organical Bodies and the exquiſite fitneſs of their ſeveral Parts for thoſe Ends and Uſes they are put to, and ſeem to have been deſigned for. For, ſay they, ſeeing that thoſe innumerable Inſtances of Blunder and Deformity were quickly removed out of Knowledge

Βουγενῆ ἀνδρόπρωρα. Emped.

ledge and Being; it is plain that no Animals ought now to be found, but ſuch as have due Organs neceſſary for their own nouriſhment and increaſe of their Kinds: ſo that this boaſted Uſefulneſs of Parts, which makes Men attribute their Origination to an intelligent and wiſe Agent, is really no argument at all: becauſe it follows alſo from the Atheiſts Aſſertion. For ſeeing that ſome Animals are actually preſerved in Being till now, they muſt needs all of them have thoſe parts that are of Uſe and Neceſſity: but That at firſt was only a Lucky Hit without Skill or Deſign, and ever ſince is a neceſſary condition of their Continuation. And ſo for inſtance, when they are urged with the admirable Frame and Structure of the Eye; which conſiſts of ſo great a Variety of Parts, all excellently adapted to the Uſes of Viſion; that (to omit Mathematical Conſiderations more proper for Opticks) hath its many Coats and Humors tranſparent and colourleſs, leſt it ſhould tinge and ſophiſticate the Light that it lets in, by a natural Jaundice; that hath its Pupil ſo conſtituted, as to admit of Contraction and Dilatation according to the differing degrees of Light, and the Exigencies of ſeeing; that hath

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Eye-lids ſo commodiouſly placed, to cleanſe the Ball from Duſt, to ſhed neceſſary moiſture upon it through numerous Glandules, and to be drawn over it like a Curtain for the convenience of ſleep; that hath a thouſand more Beauties in its figure and texture never ſtudied nor admired enough: they will briskly reply, that they willingly concede all that can be ſaid in the commendation of ſo noble a member; yet notwithſtanding they cannot admit for good reaſoning, *He that formed the Eye, ſhall not he ſee?* for it was blind Nature alone or Matter mechanically moved without conſciouſneſs or direction, that made this curious Organ of Viſion. For the ſhort of the matter is this: This elegant ſtructure of the Eye is no more than is neceſſary to Seeing; and this noble faculty of Seeing is no more than is neceſſary to Life; and conſequently is included in the very ſuppoſition of any Animals living and continuing till now; though thoſe be but the very few that at the beginning had the good fortune to have Eyes, among many millions of Monſters that were deſtitute of them, *ſine vultu cæca reperta*, and therefore did fatally periſh ſoon after their Birth. And thus when we inſiſt on o-

Pſal. 94. 9.

*Lucret.* lib. 5.

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ther like arguments of Divine Wiſdom in the frame of Animate Bodies; as the artificial Poſition of many Myriads of Valves, all ſo ſituate as to give a free paſſage to the Blood and other Humors in their due Chanels and Courſes, but not permit them to regurgitate and diſturb the great Circulation and Oeconomy of Life; as the Spiral, and not Annulary, Fibres of the Inteſtines for the better Exerciſe of their Functions; as the provident furniſhing of Temporary parts for the *Fœtus* during the time of geſtation, which are afterwards laid aſide; as the ſtrange ſagacity of little Inſects in chooſing of fit Places for the Excluſion of their Eggs, and for the proviſion of proper food, when the young ones are hatcht and need it; as the ardent στοργὴ or natural Affection in thoſe Animals, whoſe off-ſpring cannot at firſt procure their own ſuſtenance, but muſt infallibly periſh, if not fed by the Parents; as the untaught Inſtincts and Impreſſes upon every ſpecies, directing them without imitation or deliberation to the ready knowledge of proper-food, to one and the beſt way of their preſervation and defence, and to the never-failing propagation of their own kind: what-ever Conſiderations of this nature you

propoſe to this Atheiſt, as indeed ſuch Inſtances are innumerable, all evidently ſetting forth the Almighty's Wiſdom and Goodneſs to ſuch as are able to judge and will judge indifferently and impartially; he hath this one ſubterfuge from them all, That theſe things are miſtaken for tokens of Skill and Contrivance, though they be but neceſſary Conſequences of the preſent Exiſtence of thoſe creatures. For he that ſuppoſeth any Animals to ſubſiſt, doth by that very ſuppoſition allow them every Member and Faculty that are neceſſary to ſubſiſtence; ſuch as are thoſe we have juſt now enumerated. And therefore, unleſs we can prove *à priori* and independent of this Uſefulneſs, now that Things are once ſuppoſed to have exiſted and propagated; That among almoſt infinite Trials and Eſſays at the beginning of things, among millions of monſtrous Shapes and imperfect Formations, a few ſuch Animals, as now exiſt, *could not poſſibly* be produced; theſe After-Conſiderations are of very little moment: becauſe if ſuch Animals could in that way *poſſibly* be formed, as might live and move and propagate their Beings; all this admired and applauded Uſefulneſs of their ſeveral Fabricks is but a neceſ-

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ſary condition and conſequence of their Exiſtence and Propagation.

This is the laſt pretence and ſophiſtry of the Atheiſts againſt the Propoſition in my Text, That we received our Life and Being from a Divine Wiſdom and Power. And as they cannot juſtly accuſe me of any ways concealing or balking their grand Objection: ſo I believe theſe following Conſiderations will give them no reaſon to boaſt, That it cannot receive a juſt and ſatisfactory Anſwer.

(1) Firſt therefore, we affirm that we can prove and have done it already by arguments *à priori* (which is the challenge of the Atheiſts) that theſe Animals, that now exiſt, could not *poſſibly* have been formed at firſt by millions of trials. For ſeeing that they allow by their very *Hypotheſis* (and without ſtanding to that Courteſie we have proved it before) that there can be no Caſual or ſpontaneous Motion of the Particles of Matter: it will follow that every ſingle Monſter among ſo many ſuppoſed Myriads muſt have been mechanically and neceſſarily formed according to the known Laws of Motion, and the temperament and quality of the Matter that it was made of. Which is ſufficient to evince, that

*Multaq; tum tellus etiam Portenta creare, &c.* Lucret. 5.

no ſuch Monſters were or could have been formed. For to denominate them even Monſters; they muſt have had ſome rude kind of Organical Bodies; ſome *Stamina* of Life, though never ſo clumſy; ſome Syſtem of Parts compounded of Solids and Liquids, that executed (though but bunglingly) their peculiar Motions and Functions. But we have lately ſhewn it impoſſible for Nature unaſſiſted to conſtitute ſuch Bodies, whoſe ſtructure is againſt the Law of Specifick Gravity. So that ſhe could not make the leaſt endeavour towards the producing of a Monſter; or of any thing that hath more Vital and Organical Parts, than we find in a Rock of Marble or a Fountain of Water. And *again*, though we ſhould not contend with them about their Monſters and Abortions; yet ſeeing that they ſuppoſe even the perfect Animals, that are ſtill in being, to have been formed mechanically among the reſt; and only add ſome millions of Monſters to the reckoning; they are liable to all the Difficulties in the former Explication, and are expreſly refuted through the whole preceding Sermon: where it is abundantly ſhown, that a Spontaneous Production is againſt the Catholick Laws of Motion, and againſt

againſt Matter of Fact; a thing without Example, not only in Man and the nobler Animals, but in the Smalleſt of Inſects and the Vileſt of Weeds: though the Fertility of the Earth cannot be ſaid to have been impaired ſince the beginning of the World.

(2) Secondly, we may obſerve that this Evaſion of the Atheiſt is fitted only to elude ſuch Arguments of Divine Wiſdom, as are taken from things Neceſſary to the conſervation of the Animal, as the Faculties of Sight and Motion and Nutrition, and the like; becauſe ſuch Uſefulneſs is indeed included in a general Suppoſition of the Exiſtence of that Animal: but it miſerably fails him againſt other Reaſons from ſuch Members and Powers of the Body, as are not neceſſary abſolutely to Living and Propagating, but only much conduce to our better Subſiſtence and happier Condition So that the moſt obvious Contemplation of the frame of our Bodies; as that we all have double Senſories, two Eyes, two Ears, two Noſtrils, is an effectual Confutation of this Atheiſtical Sophiſm. For a double Organ of theſe Senſes is not at all comprehended in the Notion of bare Exiſtence: one of them being ſufficient

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to have preſerved Life, and kept up the Species; as common Experience is a witneſs. Nay even the very Nails of our Fingers are an infallible Token of Deſign and Contrivance: for they are uſefull and convenient to give ſtrength and firmneſs to thoſe Parts in the various Functions they are put to; and to defend the numerous Nerves and Tendons that are under them, which have a moſt exquiſite ſenſe of Pain, and without that native Armour would continually be expoſed to it: and yet who will ſay, that Nails are abſolutely neceſſary to Humane Life, and are concluded in the Suppoſition of Simple Exiſtence? It is manifeſt therefore, that there was a Contrivance and Foreſight of the Uſefulneſs of Nails antecedent to their Formation. For the old ſtale pretence of the Atheiſts, That things were firſt made fortuitouſly, and afterwards their Uſefulneſs was obſerved or diſcover'd, can have no place here; unleſs Nails were either abſolutely requiſite to the Exiſtence of Mankind, or were found only in ſome Individuals or ſome Nations of men; and ſo might be aſcribed to Neceſſity upon one account, or to Fortune upon the other. But from the Atheiſt's ſuppoſition, That among the infinite Diverſity

*Lucret. lib. 4. Nil ideo quoniam natum eſt in corpore, ut uti Poſſemus: ſed quod natum eſt, id pro creat uſum.*

verſity of the firſt terreſtrial Productions, there were Animals of all imaginable ſhapes and ſtructures of Body, all of which ſurvived and multiplied, that by reaſon of their Make and Fabrick could poſſibly do ſo; it neceſſarily follows, that we ſhould now have ſome Nations without Nails upon their Fingers; others with one Eye only, as the Poets deſcribe the *Cyclopes* in *Sicily*, and the *Arimaſpi* in *Scythia*; others with one Ear, or one Noſtril, or indeed without any Organ of Smelling, becauſe that Senſe is not neceſſary to Man's ſubſiſtence; others deſtitute of the uſe of Language, ſeeing that Mutes alſo may live: one People would have the Feet of Goats, as the feigned *Satyrs* and *Paniſci*, another would reſemble the Head of *Jupiter Ammon*, or the horned Statues of *Bacchus*: the *Sciapodes*, and *Enotocitæ* and other monſtrous Nations would be no longer Fables, but real inſtances in Nature: and, in a word, all the ridiculous and extravagant ſhapes that can be imagin'd, all the fancies and whimſies of Poets and Painters and *Ægyptian* Idolaters, if ſo be they are conſiſtent with Life and Propagation, would be now actually in Being, if our Atheiſt's Notion were true: which therefore may deſervedly paſs.

*Plinius & Strabo.*

paſs for a mere Dream and an Error: till they pleaſe to make new Diſcoveries in *Terra Incognita*, and bring along with them ſome Savages of all theſe fabulous and monſtrous Configurations.

(3) But thirdly, that we may proceed yet further with the Atheiſt, and convince him, that not only his Principle is abſurd, but his Conſequences alſo as abſurdly deduced from it: we will allow him an uncertain extravagant Chance againſt the natural Laws of Motion: though not forgetting that that notion hath been refuted before, and therefore this Conceſſion is wholly *ex abundanti*. I ſay then, that though there were really ſuch a thing as this Chance or Fortune; yet notwithſtanding it is down-right madneſs to aſcribe the Formation of Human Bodies to a Caſt of this Chance. For let us conſider the very Bodies themſelves. Here are confeſſedly all the marks and characters of Deſign in their ſtructure, that can be required, though one ſuppoſe a Divine Author had made them: here is nothing in the Work it ſelf, unworthy of ſo great a Maſter; here are no intrinſecal arguments from the Subject againſt the truth of that Suppoſition. Have we then any capacity

city to judge and distinguish, what is by Chance, and what by Art and Wisdom? Can we be sure, when a Medal is dug out of the ground, with some *Roman* Emperor's Image upon it, and an Inscription that agrees to his Titles and History, and an Impreſe upon the Reverſe relating to some memorable occurrence in his life; can we be sure, that this Medal was really coined by an Artificer, or is but a Product of the Soil from whence it was taken, that might casually or naturally receive that texture and figure: as many kinds of Fossils are very odly and elegantly shaped according to the modification of their constituent Salts, or the cavities they were formed in? Is it a matter of doubt and controverſie, whether the Pillar of *Trajan* or *Antoninus*, the Ruins of *Perſepolis*, or the late Temple of *Minerva* were the Deſigns and Works of Architecture; or perhaps might originally exist so, or be raised up in an Earthquake by subterraneous Vapour? Do not we all think our selves infallibly certain, that this or that very commodious House must needs have been built by Humane Art; though perhaps a natural Cave in a Rock may have something not much unlike to Parlors or Chambers? And yet he must be a mere Idiot, that cannot discern more Strokes

and Characters of Workmanſhip in the Structure of an Animal (in an Humane Body eſpecially) than in the moſt elegant Medal or Ædifice in the World. They will believe the firſt Parents of Mankind to have been fortuitouſly formed without Wiſdom or Art: and that for this ſolid reaſon, Becauſe it is not ſimply *impoſſible*, but that they may have been formed ſo. And who can demonſtrate (if Chance be once admitted of) but that *poſſibly* all the Inſcriptions and other remains of Antiquity may be mere *Luſus Naturæ*, and not Works of Humane Artifice. If this be good reaſoning, let us no longer make any pretences to Judgment or a faculty of diſcerning between things Probable and Improbable: for, except flat contradictions, we may upon equal reaſons believe all things, or nothing at all. And do the Atheiſts thus argue in common matters of Life? Would they have Mankind lye idle, and lay aſide all care of Proviſions by Agriculture or Commerce; becauſe poſſibly the Diſſolution of the World may happen the next moment? Had *Dinocrates* really carved Mount *Athos* into a Statue of *Alexander* the Great, and had the memory of the fact been obliterated by ſome accident; who could after-

Lucret. 5. *Dictis dabit ipſa fidem res Forſitan, & graviter terrarum motibus orbis Omnia conquaſſari in parvo tempore cernes.*

afterwards have proved it impoſſible, but that it might caſually have been formed ſo? for every Mountain muſt have ſome determinate figure, and why then not a Humane one, as poſſibly as another? And yet I ſuppoſe none could have ſeriouſly believed ſo, upon this bare account of Poſſibility. 'Tis an opinion, that generally obtains among Philoſophers, That there is but one Common Matter, which is diverſified by Accidents, and the ſame numerical quantity of it by variations of Texture may conſtitute ſucceſſively all kinds of Bodies in the World. So that 'tis not abſolutely impoſſible; but that, if you take any other Matter of equal weight and ſubſtance with the Body of a Man, you may blend it ſo long, till it be ſhuffled into Humane ſhape and an Organical ſtructure. But who is he ſo abandon'd to ſottiſh credulity, as to think, upon that Principle, That a clod of Earth in a Sack may ever by eternal ſhaking receive the Fabrick of Man's Body? And yet this is very near a-kin, nay it is exactly parallel to the reaſoning of Atheiſts about fortuitous Production. If mere Poſſibility be a good foundation for Belief; even *Lucian*'s True Hiſtory may be *true* upon that account, and *Palæphatus*'s Tales may be *credible* in ſpite of the Title.

Palæph. Περὶ Ἀπίστων *De Incredibilibus.*

It hath been excellently well urged in this caſe both by Ancients and Moderns, that to attribute ſuch admirable Structures to blind Fortune or Chance, is no leſs abſurd than to ſuppoſe, That if innumerable figures of the XXIIII Letters be caſt abroad at random, they might conſtitute in due order the whole *Æneis* of *Virgil* or the *Annales* of *Ennius*. Now the Atheiſts may pretend to elude this Compariſon; as if the Caſe was not fairly ſtated. For herein we firſt make an Idea of a particular Poem; and then demand, if Chance can poſſibly deſcribe That: and ſo we conceive Man's Body thus actually formed, and then affirm that it exceeds the power of Chance to conſtitute a Being like That: which, they may ſay, is to expect Imitation from Chance, and not ſimple Production. But at the firſt Beginning of things there was no Copy to be followed, nor any præ-exiſtent Form of Humane Bodies to be imitated. So that to put the caſe fairly, we ſhould ſtrip our minds and fancies from any particular Notion and Idea of a Living Body or a Poem: and then we ſhall underſtand, that what Shape and Structure ſoever ſhould be at firſt caſually formed, ſo that it could live and propagate, might be Man: and whatſoever ſhould reſult from the ſtrowing of thoſe

Cicero *de Natura Deorum*, 2. 37.

thoſe looſe Letters, that made any Senſe and Meaſures, might be the Poem we ſeek for.

To which we reply, That if we ſhould allow them, that there was no præ-exiſtent Idea of Humane Nature, till it was actually formed, (for the Idea of Man in the Divine Intellect muſt not now be conſider'd) yet becauſe they declare, that great Multitudes of each Species of Animals did fortuitouſly emerge out of the Soil in diſtant Countries and Climates; what could that be leſs than Imitation in blind Chance, to make many Individuals of one Species ſo exactly alike? Nay though they ſhould now, to croſs us and evade the force of the Argument, deſert their ancient Doctrine, and derive all ſorts of Animals from ſingle Originals of each kind, which ſhould be the common Parents of all the Race: yet ſurely even in this account they muſt neceſſarily conſtitute Two at leaſt, Male and Female, in every Species; which Chance could neither make ſo very nearly alike, without Copying and Imitation; nor ſo uſefully differing, without Contrivance and Wiſdom. So that let them take whether they will: If they deduce all Animals from ſingle pairs of a ſort; even to make the Second

Lucret. 5. *Hinc ubi quæque loci regio opportuna dabatur, Creſcebant uteri, &c.* & ibid. *Inde loci mortalia ſæcla creavit, Multa modis multis varia ratione coorta.*

Second of a Pair, is to write after a Copy; it is, in the former compariſon, by the caſting of looſe Letters to compoſe the præ-exiſtent particular Poem of *Ennius:* But if they make numerous Sons and Daughters of Earth among every Species of Creatures, as all their Authors have ſuppoſed; this is not only, as was ſaid before, to believe a Monky may once ſcribble the *Leviathan* of *Hobbes*, but may do the ſame frequently by an Habitual kind of Chance, even above the number of all the Impreſſion.

Let us conſider, how next to Impoſſible it is, that Chance (if there were ſuch a thing) ſhould in ſuch an immenſe Variety of Parts in an Animal twice hit upon the ſame Structure, ſo as to make a Male and a Female. Let us reſume the former inſtance of the XXIIII Letters thrown at random upon the ground. 'Tis a Mathematical Demonſtration, That theſe XXIIII do admit of ſo many Changes in their order, may make ſuch a long roll of differently ranged Alphabets, not two of which are alike; that they could not all be exhauſted, though a Million millions of Writers ſhould each write above a thouſand Alphabets a-day for the ſpace of a Million millions of years. What ſtrength of Imagination can extend it ſelf to embrace and comprehend ſuch a prodigious

*Tacqueti Arithmet. cap. de Progreſſione.*

digious Diverſity? And it is as infallibly certain, that ſuppoſe any particular order of the Alphabet to be aſſigned, and the XXIIII Letters to be caſt at a venture, ſo as to fall in a Line; it is ſo many Million of millions odds to one againſt any ſingle throw, that the aſſigned Order will not be caſt. Let us now ſuppoſe, there be only a thouſand conſtituent Members in the Body of a Man, (that we may take few enough) it is plain that the different Poſition and Situation of theſe thouſand Parts, would make ſo many differing Compounds and diſtinct Species of Animals. And if only XXIIII Parts, as before, may be ſo multifariouſly placed and order'd, as to make many Millions of Millions of differing Rows: in the ſuppoſition of a thouſand parts, how immenſe muſt that capacity of Variation be? even beyond all thought and denomintion, to be expreſſed only in mute Figures, whoſe multiplied Powers are beyond the narrowneſs of Language, and drown the Imagination in aſtoniſhment and confuſion. Eſpecially if we obſerve, that the Variety of the Alphabet conſider'd above, was in mere Longitude only: but the Thouſand parts of our Bodies may be Diverſified by Situation in all the Dimenſions of Solid Bodies: which multiplies all over and

over

over again, and overwhelms the fancy in a new Abyſs of unfathomable Number. Now it is demonſtratively certain, that it is all this odds to one, againſt any particular trial, That no one man could by caſual production be framed like another; (as the Atheiſts ſuppoſe thouſands to be in ſeveral regions of the Earth;) and I think 'tis rather more odds than leſs, that no one Female could be added to a Male; in as much as that moſt neceſſary Difference of Sex is a higher token of Divine Wiſdom and Skill, above all the power of Fortuitous Hits, than the very Similitude of both Sexes in the other parts of the Body. And *again* we muſt conſider, that the vaſt imparity of this Odds againſt the accidental likeneſs of two Caſual Formations is never leſſen'd and diminiſh'd by Trying and Caſting. 'Tis above a Hundred to one againſt any particular throw, That you do not caſt any given Sett of Faces with four Cubical Dice: becauſe there are ſo many ſeveral Combinations of the ſix Faces of four Dice. Now after you have caſt all the trials but one: 'tis ſtill as much odds at the laſt remaining time, as it was at the firſt. For blind inſenſible Chance cannot grow cunning by many experiments; neither have the preceding Caſts any influence upon thoſe that come after.

So

ſo that if this Chance of the Atheiſts ſhould have eſſayed in vain to make a Species for a Million millions of Ages, 'tis ſtill as many Millions odds againſt that Formation, as it was at the firſt moment in the beginning of Things. How incredible is it therefore; that it ſhould hit upon two Productions alike, within ſo ſhort duration of the world, according to the Doctrine of our Atheiſts? how much more, that it ſhould do ſo within the compaſs of a hundred years, and of a ſmall tract of Ground; ſo that this Male and Female might come together? If any Atheiſt can be induced to ſtake his Soul for a wager, againſt ſuch an inexhauſtible diſproportion; let him never hereafter accuſe others of Eaſineſs and Credulity.

Luc. 5. *Verum, ut opinor, habet novitatem Summa, recenſq; Natura eſt mundi, neque pridem exordia cepit.*

(4) But fourthly, we will ſtill make more ample Conceſſions, and ſuppoſe with the Atheiſt, that his Chance has actually formed all Animals in their terreſtrial Wombs. Let us ſee now, how he will preſerve them to Maturity of Birth. What Climate will he cheriſh them in, that they be not inevitably deſtroyed by Moiſture or Cold? Where is that æquability of Nine Months warmth to be found? that uniform warmth, which is ſo neceſſary even in the incubation of Birds, much more in the time of geſtation of Viviparous A-

nimals. I know, his Party have placed this great Scene in *Ægypt*, or ſomewhere between the two *Tropicks*. Now not to mention the Cool of the Nights, which alone would deſtroy the Conceptions; 'tis known that all thoſe Countries have either inceſſant Rains every year for whole months together, or are quite laid under water by Flouds from the higher Grounds; which would certainly corrupt and putrefy all the teeming Wombs of the Earth, and extinguiſh the whole brood of *Embryons* by untimely Abortions.

*Ceſalpin. Berigard.*

(5) But fifthly, we will ſtill be more obliging to this Atheiſt, and grant him his petition, That Nature may bring forth the young Infants vitally into the World. Let us ſee now what Suſtenance, what Nurſes he hath provided for them. If we conſider the preſent Conſtitution of Nature; we muſt affirm, that moſt Species muſt have been loſt for want of foſtering and feeding. 'Tis a great miſtake that, that Man only comes weak and helpleſs into the world: whereas 'tis apparent, that excepting Fiſh and Inſects (and not all of them neither) there are very few or no Creatures, that can provide for themſelves at firſt without the aſſiſtance of Parents. So that unleſs they ſuppoſe Mother Earth to be a great Animal,

Animal, and to have nurtured up her young Offspring with a conſcious Tenderneſs and providential Care; there is no poſſible help for it, but they muſt have been doubly ſtarved both with hunger and cold.

(6) But ſixthly, we will be yet more civil to this Atheiſt, and forgive him this Difficulty alſo. Let us ſuppoſe the firſt Animals maintain'd themſelves with food, though we cannot tell how. But then what ſecurity hath he made for the Preſervation of Humane Race from the Jaws of ravenous Beaſts? The Divine Writings have acquainted us, that God at the beginning gave Mankind *Dominion* (an impreſſed awe and authority) *over every living thing that moveth upon the Earth.* But in the Atheiſts *Hypotheſis* there are no imaginable means of Defence. For 'tis manifeſt, that ſo many Beaſts of Prey, Lions, Tigres, Wolves and the like, being of the ſame age with Man, and arriving at the top of their Strength in one year or two, muſt needs have worried and devoured thoſe forlorn Brats of our Atheiſts, even before they were wean'd from the *Foramina Terræ:* or at leaſt in a ſhort time after, ſeeing that all the Carnivorous Animals would have multiplied exceedingly by ſeveral Generations; before thoſe Children that eſcaped at firſt, could come to the Age of Puberty. So that Men would always leſſen, and their Enemies always encreaſe. Gen. 1.28. *Lucret.* 5.

But ſome of them will here pretend, that *Epicurus* was out in this matter; and that they were not born mere Infants out of thoſe Wombs of the Earth; but Men at their full growth, and in the prime of their ſtrength. But I pray what ſhould hinder thoſe grown luſty Infants, from breaking ſooner thoſe Membranes that involved them; as the Shell of the Egg is broken by the Bird, and the *Amnios* by the *Fœtus*? Were the Membranes ſo thick and tough, that the *Fœtus* muſt ſtay there, till he had teeth to eat through them, as young Maggots do through a Gall? *But let us anſwer theſe Fools according to their*

*their Folly.* Let us grant, that they were born with Beards, and in the full time of Manhood. They are not yet in any better condition: here are ſtill many Enemies againſt few, many *Species* againſt One; and thoſe Enemies ſpeedily multiplying in the ſecond and third and much lower generations; whereas the Sons of the Firſt Men muſt have a tedious time of Childhood and Adoleſcence, before they can either themſelves aſſiſt their Parents, or encourage them with new hopes of Poſterity. And we muſt conſider withall, that (in the notion of Atheiſm) thoſe Savages were not then, what civilized Mankind is now; but *Mutum & turpe pecus*, without Language, without mutual Society, without Arms of Offence, without Houſes or Fortifications; an obvious and expoſed Prey to the ravage of devouring Beaſts; a moſt ſorry and miſerable Plantation towards the Peopling of a World.

And now that I have followed the Atheiſts through ſo many dark mazes of Error and Extravagance: having to my knowledge omitted nothing on their ſide, that looks like a Difficulty; nor propoſed any thing in Reply, but what I my ſelf really believe to be a juſt and ſolid Anſwer: I ſhall here cloſe up the Apoſtle's Argument of the Exiſtence of God from the conſideration of Humane Nature. And I appeal to all ſober and impartial Judges of what hath been deliver'd; Whether thoſe Noble Faculties of our Souls may be only a mere Sound and Echo from the claſhing of ſenſleſs Atoms, or rather indubitably muſt proceed from a Spiritual Subſtance of a Heavenly and Divine Extraction: whether theſe admirable Fabricks of our Bodies ſhall be aſcribed to the fatal Motions or fortuitous Shufflings of blind Matter, or rather beyond controverſy to the Wiſdom and Contrivance of the Almighty Author of all things, *Who is Wonderfull in Counſel, and Excellent in Working.* To whom, &c.

Iſai. 28. 29.

*F I N I S.*